

# White Paper Report

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NEH Institute for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities:  
**Evaluating Digital Scholarship**  
(2011-13)

HT5003410

**White Paper**

NINES  
(Networked Infrastructure for Nineteenth-century Electronic Scholarship)  
at the  
University of Virginia

Project Directors:  
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## Description of the Institutes

In 2010, NINES (Networked Infrastructure for Nineteenth-century Electronic Scholarship) at the University of Virginia was awarded a 2-year NEH IADTH grant to host a series of summer institutes focused on the issues surrounding the professional evaluation of digital scholarship in the humanities, with particular attention to peer review and the promotion-and-tenure process.

The first of these institutes was held May 30 – June 3, 2011 at the University of Virginia. Twenty-three participants from a range of public and private colleges and universities convened for a week of threaded discussions, roundtables, and presentations. The discussions were facilitated by the project leaders (Laura Mandell, Susan Schreibman, and Andrew Stauffer), along with two other instructors, Amy Earhart from Texas A&M and Andrew Jewell from the University of Nebraska. Keynote presentations by Bethany Nowviskie and David Germano, both from the University of Virginia, augmented the formal programming.

Discussion cohorts were organized around five keywords of scholarship, and asked participants to discuss their varying nature in print and digital environments. The keywords were Conceptualization, Evidence & Discovery, Remediation, Interpretation, and Communication. During the sessions, participants wrote in online collaborative note-taking spaces, and these evolving documents were the basis for later work. All participants were part of conversations related to these keywords, and the sessions culminated in a series of roundtables addressing the challenges and opportunities of digital scholarship in these areas.

Plenary presentations were interspersed throughout the week. We heard from Bethany Nowviskie, Director of Digital Research & Scholarship at the University of Virginia Library and Associate Director of the Scholarly Communication Institute, on the importance of collaborative centers in digital humanities work. David Germano, Founding Director of the Tibetan and Himalayan Library, and Director of SHANTI (Sciences, Humanities and Arts Network of Technological Initiatives) at the University of Virginia, spoke on strategies for managing large-scale, inter-institutional humanities projects. Amy Earhart and Andrew Jewell gave demonstrations of their own digital projects and discussed their personal experiences as faculty members. Andrew Stauffer and Dana Wheelles discussed the NINES community model and its peer-review process for born-digital scholarship. And we organized a plenary roundtable on “Institutional Keywords,” in which participants who were Deans and Provosts offered terms (such as “resources” and “accountability”) from the administrative perspective.

The final day of the institute was devoted to the revision of our collaborative notes into sharable formats for public commentary. Some of the results of this process are now visible on the website

for the institutes: <http://institutes.nines.org> in the “Whitepapers and Documents” section, and they are also included as appendices to this report.

We held the second institute from June 19-22, 2012, also at the University of Virginia. In the course of the 2011 institute, it became clear that one primary precondition for effective evaluation of digital scholarship is the culture of the department in which it is being produced. With this in mind, we decided to focus our discussions in the 2012 Institute at the level of departmental leadership. We invited seventeen chairs of departments from a wide range of colleges and universities (state universities, small colleges, ivy league institutions) for three days of dialogue on the topic. In addition, we restricted the range of disciplines: all participants were in departments of language and literature. This allowed us to focus on discipline-specific criteria for hiring, promotion, and tenure.

The 2012 institute involved many of the same leaders (Stauffer, Mandell, Schreibman, Jewell, and Earhart), and featured keynote addresses by Siva Vaidhyanathan, Robertson Professor in Media Studies at the University of Virginia and author of the acclaimed book, *The Googlization of Everything*, and Jerome McGann, John Stewart Bryan Professor at the University of Virginia, General Editor of The Complete Writings and Pictures of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Hypermedia Archive, and a noted authority on the digital humanities. In a series of conversations and workshops, the group collectively identified five key issues for department chairs in creating a vital ecology of evaluation for digital scholarly work:

1. Collaboration: encouraging, sustaining, assigning credit
2. Core values of literary / humanities scholarship: defining, communicating, integrating with the digital, changing values
3. Teaching/ training / professional development: integrating digital tools, methods, projects
4. Communication with administrators, peers, public: developing a common language
5. Publishing and scholarly networks: agents, institutions, modes, platforms, forces

Breakout sessions were devoted to each of these areas, interspersed with presentations and demonstrations of digital projects. Participants were encouraged to develop ideas and identify activities they could engage in as heads of departments, either locally or collectively, to advance professional practice. One goal of the institute was a kind of “match-making” whereby chairs facing related institutional issues could band together to work on follow-up initiatives. In addition, our hope was that participants would take ideas back to their home institutions and use the lessons learned at the Institute to change local practice.

For our concluding event, NINES held a small working-group meeting at Modern Language Association Headquarters in New York from May 20-21, 2013. This meeting involved a core team of ten people, including the project leaders, Steve Olsen from the MLA, and some

particularly engaged participants from previous years. In the course of the meeting we discussed a wide range of issues related to the evaluation of digital scholarship at the department and administrative levels. We considered (among other topics) the phenomenon of Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), the place of smaller liberal arts institutions in online consortiums such as Coursera and EdX, the need to provide department chairs and members of tenure and review committees with the resources and expertise to assess innovative digital scholarship, and the importance of training the younger generations of scholars, who will go on to hold administrative positions and serve as chairs.

As the conversation developed, we turned to focus on the outcomes that we wanted the institute to have. Rather than produce another set of guidelines, we decided to offer an analysis of the existing scene of evaluation in the aggregate, and provide some principles and areas for further dialogue. Participants worked in small groups during the second half of the meeting to draft a document that reflected these aims and distilled the conclusions of the three institutes. This document will form the basis of our white paper for the NEH. We also used this final meeting as a strategy session, recognizing that the MLA and affiliated organizations such as the Association of Departments of English (ADE) as primary organs for disseminating ideas and policies to the profession. We talked with Steve Olsen, who represented the MLA at our discussions, about specific ways of partnering with these organizations to ensure that the documents that the white paper and other documents emerging from the institutes reach their target audiences.

What follows is a distillation of the vital issues and recurring themes of our conversations, along with recommendations for how to create an environment in which digital scholarship can contribute to a collective reimagining of what the humanities are, and can become.

## **Abiding issues raised at the NINES Institutes**

Digital technologies have begun to transform humanities scholarship, and with it the various institutions that sustain its production, archiving, and re-use. Indeed, the future of the humanities disciplines within academic institutions is increasingly bound up with the digital. As the human cultural record moves online, scholars are able to ask new questions and bring new data to bear on old hypotheses, seeing more deeply into the past. And they are able to produce dynamic, media-rich projects and share their work widely with a global audience. New modes of editing, considering, and disseminating texts, and new ways of communicating scholarship to students in and beyond the classroom, have transformed not only how literature is studied and taught, but our very understanding of the literary.

Statistics provided by the MLA tell the story of the rise of digital scholarship in literary studies. Digital humanities projects indexed by the MLA International Bibliography more than tripled

(from 401 to 1,645) between 2008-2012, while electronic journals indexed almost doubled (from 239 to 447). The number of sessions at the annual MLA Convention that include digital topics has more than doubled since 2010 (from 27 to 66), and the number of jobs listed in the English edition of the MLA Job Information List specifying “technology and digital media” as a desirable field has nearly doubled since 2004 (from 7.7% to 14.3%). Finally, the membership of the MLA discussion group Computer Studies in Language and Literature has almost doubled since 2008 (from 949 to 1708).

The result is a moment of intense opportunity for the humanities, where digital work is reaching across the disciplines and out to the public in unprecedented ways. These opportunities are coupled with a need for sustained engagement by faculty, administrators, students, and staff to reimagine the intellectual frameworks and institutional structures of humanities scholarship. The proliferation of digital scholarship comes at a time when humanistic disciplines are under pressure to account for themselves to constituencies within and beyond academia. Scholars who have begun to engage and develop technologically-informed approaches to the study of literature can serve as a resource for all humanists as we re-map our disciplines and their institutions.

At the same time, there are challenges and questions regarding the relationship of digital methodologies to disciplinary practice and institutional structures. On the one hand, traditional humanists may see the digital as either irrelevant or threatening to their scholarship and teaching. On the other, institutions of higher education often find themselves unprepared to accommodate the rapidly-advancing nature of digital scholarly work, even as they rush to adopt the new technology. In either case, conversations about the digital humanities quickly become conversations about the nature and commitments of higher education itself.

In short, the advent of digital scholarship has prompted renewed attention to questions at the heart of the humanist project. The task of evaluating digital scholarship thus necessitates wider considerations of what humanists value, how they are trained, and what contributions they can make to institutional and public debates about the role of the humanities.

## **1. Disciplinary culture**

The NINES Institutes regularly returned to discussions of the various ways that digital scholarship disrupts the culture of humanities disciplines. In its emphasis on methodological innovation and technical practice, digital scholarship frequently demands an interdisciplinary perspective. Moreover, the nature of such work offers a challenge to basic humanities practices and assumptions, particularly those centered on the monograph.

First, digital scholarship is collaborative, involving varied practitioners and skills. An imaginative scholarly digital project may involve humanists and social scientists, archivists and librarians, software engineers, informatics experts, and interface designers. However, most humanities disciplines are not well prepared to assess individual contributions to collaborative work. Such

projects are particularly problematic in terms of hiring, tenure and promotion, when departments must assess the individual accomplishments and intellectual potential of a candidate. Professional advancement across the academy remains strongly tied to the monograph and the interpretive work of single authors, and digital work cuts athwart these pathways.

Second, digital scholarship is experimental and process-oriented. This challenges traditional expectations that a scholarly work should emerge as a final, polished product that synthesizes a completed program of research. Digital projects are iterative, evolving processes, often designed speculatively to investigate some aspect of the cultural field. Unlike a book or article, a piece of digital scholarship may take multiple unexpected forms over time. Further, we remain in the very early days of digital humanities work, much of which has a provisional, forward-looking character and has been incompletely integrated into scholarly practice.

Third, digital scholarship is layered and multiform. One cannot judge a piece of digital scholarship just by looking at the interface: intellectual, creative work has been done at various layers including the architecture, underlying code and data structures which may be invisible to the average user. A digital humanities scholar may be creating software, designing tools, encoding cultural materials, developing data standards, and creating web interfaces at the same time that he/she is remediating and annotating content. Evaluation must include each layer of the digital project, which can require high levels of technical expertise.

While recognizing these challenges, participants in the institute affirmed the importance of integrating the digital humanities in the disciplines and transforming disciplinary study from within. Rather than hiving off such work as a separate field (“The Digital Humanities”), we should work to reconfigure disciplinary practice in the humanities to accommodate digital theory and practice.

## **2. Managing institutional change**

The NINES Institute also took up the question of where to start structural interventions that will promote digital scholarship and integrate it into institutional culture and processes. It became clear that, while larger institutional initiatives and support are necessary, the Departments are the key sites of innovation, resistance, and conflict around changing scholarly methods, standards, and practices. Departments are the places in academic organizations where disciplinary interests and norms intersect with institutional interests. Thus to successfully foster new modes of scholarship, institutions need to enlist change first at the Departmental level, while providing larger infrastructure support that will allow digital scholarship to flourish.

### **a. Resources and support**

NINES participants observed that digital scholarship entails a higher level and different kind of support than has been usual in the humanities. For most institutions, this will mean educating

and supporting faculty to pursue the steady grant streams that sustain digital archives, tool-building, and research – and to develop the project-management skills this work requires. In addition, digital humanities work is best coordinated and sustained via centers or umbrella institutes that can provide centralized resources to the departments. Such centers involve additional staff resources and new conceptions of expertise. Digital humanities projects often lead faculty to new collaborations internally – with library staff, information services, intellectual property experts, designers, and software developers – and externally, with projects housed at other institutions. Imaginative strategic plans for supporting such alliances are crucial.

### **b. Sources of resistance to change**

Many who resist the integration of digital methods into traditional humanities fields see a fundamental opposition between “digital” and “humanities,” and understand the conjunction as an existential threat to their field of study and its underlying values. Fear of evacuation of “the human” is often bound up with resistance to the corporatization of higher education: an increasing emphasis on education as primarily instrumental, the disruptive advent of MOOCs and online course delivery, an emerging focus on assessment and learning analytics. And it is sometimes bound up with a resistance to the “scientizing” of intellectual work across the disciplines. Difficult to disentangle, these fears are compounded by the innumeracy of many humanists and stereotypes of the sciences with whom, in fact, the humanities may share many values. Efforts to cultivate digital scholarship within humanities departments must confront these resistances. In the view of NINES participants, local conversations, talks, seminars, and events are the best way to begin. In addition, support for collaborative research initiatives can help redress these concerns.

Other sources of resistance are concrete and practical. Digital scholarship typically involves large investments of time and creative energy, required on top of a scholar’s typical workload. Further, because digital tools and methods are themselves changing so rapidly, practitioners are often working at the limits of their mastery – an uncomfortable and tiring way to pursue research. In the view of NINES participants, support for retraining in new scholarly methods – from travel and tuition funding to leave time, as well as explicit affirmations of the value of new expertise at Departmental and institutional review – could make an important difference.

Those pursuing digital scholarship in the humanities also face considered intellectual objections. Some digital humanities projects, such as editing texts and building archives, may be seen as second-order scholarship. Building platforms or setting data standards may be seen as service rather than scholarly work. Digital humanities methodologies – such as the quantitative analysis of large corpora of texts, or the – may be seen as abandoning scholarly principles and practices. Institute participants affirmed the idea that quality, significance, and contributions to a field remain the important standards for evaluating any scholarship, including digital scholarship. They emphasized the responsibility of scholars and peer reviewers for making the case for the value of digital scholarship in these terms, and articulating the relevance of digital humanities to

disciplinary traditions and interests. They noted the increasingly robust resources available to us for doing so (see Appendix I).

### **3. Faculty and staff: hiring, tenure, and promotion**

Institute participants focused particularly on issues related to the hiring, tenure, and promotion of faculty and staff, and the conditions for a healthy culture of evaluation of digital scholarship. They observed that humanities departments often lack faculty expertise in digital technologies, and thus have trouble building consensus around digital scholarship. In a time of restricted budgets for hiring, departments can be reluctant to prioritize digital specialists over those with expertise in traditional fields. As a result, departments tend to replicate themselves in hiring and promotion processes. Retention is also hampered for more isolated digital scholars, who may lack collaborators and have trouble convincing colleagues of the value of their research.

Cluster hires are a viable strategy to jumpstart an adequate representation of digital knowledge at the department level and maximize retention. Participants spoke of the importance of departments developing an enriched understanding of the digital humanities -- its challenges and opportunities -- before embarking on ambitious hiring agendas. This could be aided by organizing preliminary symposia, visits from external digital practitioners, and even basic training in digital theory and methods for search committee members.

In the absence of a workforce rich in digital expertise, search committees need to find ways to include at least one member familiar with digital humanities -- from another department, if necessary. Similarly, the composition of P&T committees, particularly at the Departmental level, should include expertise in digital humanities scholarship. Care should be exercised in soliciting external letters of evaluation from those who can assess candidates' digital qualifications, even if this means allowing the candidate to nominate external reviewers.

Participants also noted the central importance of "alternative academic" positions in the field of digital humanities. Typically humanities PhDs working in academic settings but not in faculty positions, these "alt-ac" professionals are collaborators, creators, and researchers, bringing their humanities training and hybrid digital skills to bear on scholarly questions and projects.

Administrators should think creatively about faculty and staff hiring plans that can accommodate a range of positions; and, rather than thinking of these digital humanities professionals as support or service staff, departmental faculty should join forces with them in the pursuit of scholarly research.

### **4. Graduate and undergraduate training**

Participants in the NINES institute agreed that the next generation of scholar-teachers will need to possess sophistication in a widening array of methods and texts, including both digital and

analog modes of scholarship and teaching. Curriculums need to evolve to include digital training at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and in ways that respect the scholarly traditions and values of the humanities. For the health of the humanities both in the academy and in the broader culture, it is imperative that language and literature departments grapple with the opportunities and challenges of digital technologies.

### **a. Graduate education**

A comprehensive graduate-level humanities education fairly requires some expertise in digital research methods and pedagogy. New modes of scholarship and teaching demand conversancy with digital technologies. Further, new careers for digitally-trained humanities PhDs are emerging inside and outside the academy. Yet at this point, few graduate programs in the humanities are systematically fostering digital expertise. Those that are typically do so outside of the regular curriculum, via faculty research projects, digital humanities centers, library initiatives, and the like. Relatively few faculty in the humanities possess the expertise themselves to mentor and evaluate research projects that integrate digital and traditional expertise. And graduate training is shaped by aspirational drives aimed at a small set of elite institutions that themselves have little incentive to change.

NINES participants agreed that PhD-granting departments to rethink the current practices and methods of graduate education to integrate digital projects, methods, and expertise within traditional frameworks of training and study. The primary driver here is the dissertation, which has traditionally been imagined as a proto-monograph. This requirement has meant that graduate students have effectively been discouraged from pursuing digital scholarly projects. Participants recommended that departments create incentives for graduate students to explore and take the professional risks that digital scholarship entails (e.g., collaboration opportunities, research grants, support for off-site training, reconsideration of time-to-degree pressures). They should prepare to evaluate early stage digital modes of scholarship (as part of the requirements toward the degree) in a way that foregrounds excellence, significance, and contributions to a field. Finally, they should involve graduate students in the creation, teaching, and evaluation of online materials and courses.

### **b. Undergraduate education**

Digital technologies offer tremendous opportunities to educate students for citizenship, careers, and thoughtful lives in a networked world. Undergraduate coursework can productively bring humanities content and values into contact with digital tools and methods, allowing our students to reencounter and rethink the global cultural heritage. Less concerned to define themselves in narrow disciplinary terms, undergraduates (unlike graduate students) are remarkably open to the opportunity to work with new digital methods, tools, and texts. For them, this work can be a net gain in every respect: intellectually exciting, socially maturing, and career enhancing.

Integrating digital humanities into the undergraduate curriculum across course levels offers opportunities to enable students to think critically about the digital resources they use and choose them wisely. In bringing the humanities into the online space in which students spend so much of their time, such integration can promote core humanities values. Finally, such integration can enable students to be experimenters and makers, rather than simply consumers of digital material, while also creating intellectual projects with a life outside and beyond an individual course.

NINES participants suggested that the undergraduate and graduate classrooms were the obvious starting point for bringing digital tools and methods to bear on traditional humanities content. At the same time, some expressed concern over the potential elision of digital humanities pedagogy and massive online courses such as those offered by Coursera. Faculty need to be involved in the thoughtful design of pedagogies that will faithfully serve students as well as the institutions that sustain humanities scholarship and teaching. English Departments specifically will need to articulate the value of literary studies as distinct from that of media studies, communications, and the digital humanities as such – while also pursuing the interdisciplinary paths offered by these and other fields. Much of this type of negotiation will likely begin at the level of the curriculum, the primary driver of hiring decisions and thus the constitution of departments.

## **5. The pipeline of expertise**

The NINES Institutes tracked the need to expand the pool of expert evaluators for digital scholarship in the humanities. There is currently an acute bottleneck of qualified senior humanities scholars who can serve as reviewers of digital scholarship, for grants, for digital peer-review, for hiring, and for promotion and tenure committees. The pipeline remains narrow and seems likely to grow slowly in the short term, as today's fledgling digital humanities scholars make their way upwards in the profession over the next decade. The transformation of graduate programs (already discussed) is part of this process. In the meanwhile, strategies need to be found to deal with the shortage.

Institute participants identified the need also to expand the conversation about the rigorous evaluation of digital scholarship beyond the community of active digital humanists. At every academic level (baccalaureate, graduate, post-doc, faculty), we need to create research and learning opportunities that will deepen sophistication among the community of practitioners who will become the next generation of reviewers. This will ultimately mean involving the majority of humanities faculty in the understanding, use, evaluation, and/or development of digital tools and methods. Ideally, this will happen within humanities fields and disciplines, as scholars approach digital technologies not for their own sake, but in pursuit of specific intellectual questions, historical and cultural issues, and pedagogical goals.

Guidelines for the evaluation of digital scholarship published by the MLA and other professional associations have steadily but slowly promulgated common practices. The level of audience awareness of these guidelines among scholars, Department Chairs, and administrators remains low – and this is true across the humanities. At this moment of transition, it is crucial for professions to have explicit and clear conversations about the nature, quality, and significance of digital scholarship. Thus, as part of their normal administrative and scholarly business, department chairs, administrators, and faculty on hiring and reappointment committees should familiarize themselves with these guidelines. The MLA and the ADE should be encouraged to find ways to increase the visibility of existing guidelines. Further, we need a wider-ranging conversation about the values behind the evaluation of digital scholarship, along the lines of the NINES Institutes.

## **6. Scholarly communication**

### **a. Peer Review**

Institute participants recognized that as scholars working in digital media bring new forms of scholarship to their departments and institutions, they face a unique set of circumstances complicating its evaluation and acceptance. First, the increasing interest in digital technologies in the academic world has coincided with the growing “crisis in scholarly publishing,” in which the infrastructure has been stressed by economic forces to the point of breaking causing the opportunities for traditional print publication of scholarship to diminish. Those working in digital media face the added complication that much of their scholarly work is expressed in new forms that are not amenable to print publication, which traditionally provided a peer review process and professional prestige.

Second, in the absence of the imprimatur of university presses and scholarly journals, the burden for evaluation falls more squarely on the shoulders of departments and their faculty members. But departments often lack faculty members who can bring to bear not only field knowledge to evaluate the intellectual content of a project, but also the technical experience to understand the intertwined theoretical and technical choices in a project’s design. And department chairs often do not know where to find that expertise. Thus digital scholars work at a disadvantage in the high stakes process of tenure and promotion review because of the difficulties of obtaining appropriate peer review of their scholarship.

Within the field of digital humanities new forms of peer review have been developed. Groups such as NINES and 18<sup>th</sup> Connect are providing peer review of digital scholarly editions. Journals such as *Vectors* provide peer review of born digital scholarship. More traditional journals such as *Shakespeare Quarterly* have experimented with hybrid peer review, while other publishers, such as NYU Press offered pre and post-publication review (as in Kathleen Fitzpatrick’s *Planned Obsolescence*).

However, these new modalities of peer review are not yet widely accepted or practiced in the profession. They remain intriguing experiments.

## **b. Publishing**

It seems clear that the ecosystem and distribution system of the monograph is failing. For all its prestige, traditional print publication may no longer be the most effective route to immediate and widespread impact within a field. In fact, the scholarly monograph is at risk of being marginalised in the new ecosystem of open access publishing.

But open access publishing, as digital scholarship more generally, requires a new type of infrastructure. Just as libraries, publishers, and scholars created an ecosystem that sustained print publication, a new infrastructure must be developed and maintained to support a robust ecology for digital scholarship and publication. Scholars must be assured that the digital work they create is durable and will remain part of the long tail of human inquiry. Indeed, one of the most persistent concerns surrounding the evaluation of digital scholarship involves its stability and sustainability. Roles are shifting for scholars, publishers, librarians, and information technologists in providing continual access to scholarship, and there are no clear answers as to how born-digital scholarship will be preserved and delivered over time.

On a more hopeful note, institute participants agreed that the digital presents a powerful and enormous opportunity for humanists to engage a wider public: “publishing” our work in a larger sense of the word. Digital humanities projects provide opportunities for scholars to contribute to public dialogues in a more timely way than print publication allows. They help make clear the value of humanistic inquiry and the justification for continued funding, while also allowing the public to contribute in real and meaningful ways to our scholarly endeavors.

## **Conclusion**

The NINES institutes on “Evaluating Digital Scholarship” were most successful in convening conversations among participants from a range of institutional and professional backgrounds. In bringing together digital practitioners, traditional literary scholars, department chairs, and upper-level academic administrators from a range of colleges and universities, the institutes enabled rich discussion of the issues surrounding the evaluation of digital humanities work in the academy. In so doing, the institutes prepared participants to return to their campuses and initiate similar conversations among local stakeholders. We continually affirmed the importance of ongoing engagement on the part of larger portions of the academy regarding these issues. Change has to be scholar-driven, and the professoriate cannot merely be reactive to larger forces in the technological landscape.

We should add that there was a sense of tremendous energy and optimism at our sessions, and the possibilities for the humanities in the digital age were everywhere evident. These opportunities bring with them challenges, of course, and this report is meant as a summary of the major issues or pressure points in the ongoing transformation of humanities scholarship in the academy. Digital modes and methods are part of the larger conversation about the humanities, and the NINES institutes gave us time to reflect, share ideas, and plan for future contributions.

A version of this report will be posted on the NINES institutes website (<http://institutes.nines.org>), allowing participants and the larger academic community to comment and reflect on our conclusions. In addition, plan to work within MLA Commons to drive a wider consideration about these issues. We hope to see the development of specific initiatives coming from participants to address local situations. Our goal for these institutes was the seeding of new perspectives at many institutions, as well as the gathering of experiences and issues from a wide range of academic practice. These efforts will continue as we work with larger professional organizations and individual commentators to extend and deepen the conversation.

## **Appendix I: List of attendees of the NINES Institutes**

\*“*Formerly*” denotes professional identification at the time of participation in the NINES-NEH Summer Institute.

Stephen Carl Arch, Professor, Department of English, Michigan State University (2012) *Formerly Chair of English*

Ann Ardis, Deputy Dean, College of Arts & Sciences, University of Delaware (2011) *Formerly Professor of English and Associate Dean of Arts and Humanities*

Maria K. Bachman, Professor and Chair of English; Director, Interdisciplinary Studies, Coastal Carolina University (2011)

Alison Booth, Professor of English, the University of Virginia (2011)

Laurel Brake, Professor Emerita of Literature and Print Culture, Birkbeck, University of London (2011, 2013)

Linda Bree, Editorial Director, Arts and Literature, Cambridge University Press (2012)

Ken A. Bugajski, Associate Professor of English Education, Department of English and Foreign Languages, University of St. Francis (2012) *Formerly Chair of English and Foreign Languages*

Alison Byerly, President, Lafayette College (PA) (2011) *Formerly Provost and Executive Vice President as well as Professor of English at Middlebury College*

Antonio Candau, Associate Professor of Spanish and Chair, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Case Western Reserve University (2012)

Sheila Cavanagh, Professor of English, Emory University (2011)

Cristina Della Coletta, Associate Dean for Humanities and the Arts and Professor of Italian, University of Virginia (2011, 2013)

Amy E. Earhart, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Texas A&M University (2011-12)

Jennifer Edmond, Director of Strategic Projects, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Trinity College Dublin (2012)

Jill Ehnenn, Professor of English, Appalachian State University (2011)

Dino Felluga, Associate Professor of English, Purdue University (2012)

Regenia Gagnier, Professor of English, University of Exeter, and Director, Exeter Interdisciplinary Institute (2011)

David Germano, Professor of Religious Studies, University of Virginia (2011)  
Pamela Gilbert, Albert Brick Professor of English, University of Florida (2011)

Ann-Barbara Graff, Associate Professor of English Studies and Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Nipissing University (2012)

Robert Gregg, Professor of History and Dean, Division of Arts and Sciences, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey (2011)

Gregory Grieve, Associate Professor of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina at Greensboro (2011)

Jo Anne Harris, Marion L. Brittain Postdoctoral Fellow in the School of Literature, Communication and Culture, Georgia Institute of Technology (2011)

Samuel J. Huskey, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Classics and Letters, University of Oklahoma (2012)

Andrew Jewell, Associate Professor of Digital Projects at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Libraries (2011-12)

Claudia Johnson, Murray Professor of English Literature and Chair, Department of English, Princeton University (2012)

Nick Laiacona, Head, Performant Software, and Lead Developer for the NINES project (2011)

Mary Loeffelholz, Professor of English and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Northeastern University (2011)

Elizabeth Loizeaux, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs in the Office of the Provost, and Professor of English in the College of Arts & Sciences, Boston University (2011, 2013)

Laura Mandell, Director, Initiative for Digital Humanities, Media, and Culture; and Professor, Department of English, Texas A&M University (2011-12)

Teresa Mangum, Associate Professor of English and Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies; and Director of the Obermann Center for Advanced Studies, University of Iowa (2011)

Meredith Martin, Associate Professor of English, Princeton University (2011)

Jerome McGann, University Professor and John Stewart Bryan Professor of English, University of Virginia (2012)

Deborah Morse, Professor of English, The College of William and Mary (2011)

Jonathan Mulrooney, Associate Professor and Chair of English, College of the Holy Cross (2012-13)

Timothy Murray, Director, Society of the Humanities, and Professor of Comparative Literature and English, Cornell University; Curator, Rose Goldsen Archive of New Media Studies (2011)

Bethany Nowviskie, Director of Digital Research & Scholarship at the University of Virginia Library and Associate Director of the Scholarly Communication Institute (2011)

Steve Olsen, Associate Director of Research and Manager of Digital Services, Modern Language Association (2011-13)

Bradley Pasanek, Assistant Professor of English, University of Virginia (2011)

Nancy Peterson, Professor and Head, Department of English, Purdue University (2012)

Joel Pfister, Olin Professor of English and Chair, American Studies, Wesleyan University (2012)

Michael Pickard, Ph.D. Candidate, English, University of Virginia (2011-13)

David Radcliffe, Professor of English at Virginia Polytechnical University (2011)

Katherine Rowe, Professor of English, Director, Tricollage Digital Humanities Consortium, and Director, Katharine Houghton Hepburn Center, Bryn Mawr College (2013)

Susan Schreibman, Long Room Hub Associate Professor in Digital Humanities, School of English, Trinity College Dublin (2011-13)

Andrew Stauffer, Director of NINES and Associate Professor of English, University of Virginia (2011-13)

Justin Tonra, Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow, National University of Ireland, Galway (2011) *Formerly Visiting Professor of English, University of Virginia*

Ángel Tuninetti, Associate Professor of Spanish and Chair, Department of World Languages, Literatures and Linguistics, West Virginia University (2012)

Siva Vaidhyanathan, Robertson Professor and Chair, Department of Media Studies, University of Virginia (2012)

Lisa Vargo, Professor, Department of English, University of Saskatchewan (2012)

Nancy Warren, Professor and Head, Department of English, Texas A&M University (2012)

Dana Wheelles, Project Manager, NINES (Networked Infrastructure for Nineteenth-Century Electronic Scholarship) (2011-12)

Cole Woodcox, Professor of English, Truman State University (2012) *Formerly Chair of Department of English and Linguistics*

Nancy Workman, Professor of English, Lewis University (2011)

## **Appendix II: Workshop papers produced at the NINES Institutes**

### **1. Digital Humanities Scholarship: Recommendations for Chairs in Language and Literature Departments**

Authored by Alison Booth, Pamela K. Gilbert, Steve Olsen, Brad Pasanek and the NINES/NEH Summer Institute Group, 2011

It is increasingly clear that humanities scholarship in the twenty-first century will be profoundly affected by the rise of digital media which are changing the practices and platforms of scholarly production. It is in the strategic interests of English departments to foster faculty and student engagement with the new skills and forms of inquiry afforded by digital humanities and new media. However important promotion and tenure guidelines and practices are to this process, equally important will be the creation of a departmental culture that successfully integrates digital humanities and new media into the department's intellectual life and mission. The following remarks on leadership strategies are intended to help department administrators assist candidates and also contribute to the change in departmental and institutional culture that we hope to promote.

Department chairs communicate in many directions: outward to national and international professional and scholarly organizations (Modern Languages Association, Association of Departments of English, Association of Departments of Foreign Languages, National Endowment for the Humanities); upward to administration, development officers, and college-level promotion and tenure committees; laterally to administrative peers and senior colleagues in the library and other departments, as well as downward through the curriculum to faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates.

Chairs should consider the culture of their department and compare their practices to those of other departments, schools, and programs at their own and other institutions. A survey of the field shows that digital humanities and new media are already embedded in many disciplines and institutional environments: public initiatives in the humanities, pedagogy, rhetoric and composition, media studies and library science or information technology training are all areas that may be affiliated with or even housed in literature departments. These fields, often collaborative in nature, are quickly evolving areas of activity and inquiry, and of broad significance and utility for all kinds of scholars in our departments.

When exploring ways to better integrate the digital humanities into their environment, chairs of departments in languages and literatures might consider these suggested areas of approach.

## Cluster Hiring and Human Resources

The most direct way to change departmental culture is through hiring, and the most effective hiring brings in several faculty members at the same time. If a department can include only one or two faculty specializing in digital scholarship in some or most of their research, teaching, or service, then the department should ensure that this activity is fully supported by joint appointments across departments, where possible. An additional strategy to promote a change in culture is to invite visiting scholars to consult or serve in short residencies, seminars or workshops, open to all members of the department.

As in other disciplines, a faculty appointment in DH cannot succeed without additional allocation of resources, including staff. DH research often requires qualified collaborators in IT, libraries, or other areas who have assigned time to devote to collaborating with a new faculty hire. Such collaborators may or may not be tenure track but will have academic credentials and proven technical expertise and experience. It is important to remember that such staff may not have any portion of their work week available for allocation to the project, and so their allocation of time must be negotiated at the time of hire.

## The Dissertation

The culture of the profession replicates in the dissertation. The dissertations of today are the scholarship of tomorrow. Therefore to transform and grow as a discipline, it is essential to intervene at the level of graduate education. Departments should introduce training in digital scholarship at the earliest stages of graduate study. The department chair is uniquely positioned to work with the director of graduate studies to encourage and reward participation in the digital humanities throughout the graduate career.

## Development or Fundraising

Chairs should identify internal or external resources (granting agencies, legitimating agencies like NINES, potential collaborators) or institutes and centers that focus on new media or digital scholarship. Chairs might pursue collaboration between departments, programs, and schools at their home institution that would join in proposed initiatives, such as summer institutes or lecture series, as well as staff or space allocations. Chairs may wish to consult with development officers to solicit donor support in the form of seed money or endowments for digital humanities.

## Infrastructure

The Chair can help ensure that the department has access to servers, laptops, server space, and other materials, facilities, or support. Perhaps more importantly, the chair can prioritize support for a dedicated, in-department IT expert, whose work goes beyond repair and basic IT maintenance. See the MLA Guidelines for Institutional Support of and Access to IT for Faculty Members and Students .

## PR and Education

Departments may schedule presentations and symposia that bring experts and speakers from other institutions to talk about their work. In particular, chairs could consider adding to such events special workshops for graduate students and interested faculty. Note, these workshops should be small in number of participants and take place separately from the principal presentation and should emphasize practice, skills, and other hands-on aspects of humanities computing.

### Department Ecology

Chairs help new hires communicate with others and can integrate a cutting-edge practitioner into the existing culture of the department. (See recommendations below.) Expectations on both sides must be articulated. Chairs facilitate cross-talk by helping explain how a DH practitioner's research and pedagogy fit into the broader intellectual work of the department. As with any new hire, DH candidates should be encouraged to look at existing courses and projects and imagine how their work interfaces with, adds to or challenges the existing work of the department in order that they may be integrated into an existing scholarly conversation and be clear on their own relation to the department's broader goals. Current colleagues should be encouraged to review the new person's work to discover unexpected points of contact among research interests and methods.

### Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Interdisciplinarity requires interlocutors. Colleagues in all fields should have incentives and formal opportunities to pursue dialogue with other communities of scholars. If faculty members have used technology to collaborate with colleagues from other disciplines on the same campus or on different campuses, departments and institutions should seek the assistance of experts in those other disciplines to assess and evaluate such interdisciplinary work.

Also, chairs should consider hosting informal or formal meetings with other chairs or administrators to discuss how collaboration is handled in other disciplines. That would help a good deal to provide models (whether to adopt or to critique) for reporting and crediting collaboration, and also for evaluating it. Not all collaboration is equal, or equally successful. Faculty within the department who have served on college or university tenure and promotion committees can be helpful here as well.

Specific Recommendations for hiring, midterm, annual review and tenure review for chairs and candidates

- Articulate clear expectations upon hire
- Reformulate and tweak these expectations, each year, to set benchmarks for achievement and for assessment
- At mid-term review, collaboratively identify specific benchmarks, and the mode of evaluation that will be used to determine successful completion. (This is a portion of a contract for tenure, in effect)
- Identify potential referees early on and revise as necessary

- Identify outside resources and potential collaborators at same time (granting agencies, donors, legitimating agencies like NINES, potential collaborators)
- Identify audiences and expected impact of the research: what is it, who is it for and why is it significant?
- Document effort
- Use informal avenues to communicate with colleagues in a collegial manner so all faculty feel an interest in and responsibility for success.

Each hiring department should set clear guidelines for tenure and promotion for the candidate. The chair might want to review departmental and institutional promotion and tenure guidelines to make sure they do not contain an unintentional bias against work in digital media (see ADE Bulletin 145 (Spring 2008), pp. 51-58, “Our Capacious Caper: Exposing Print-Culture Bias in Departmental Tenure Documents”). There are a number of existing documents to consult about this, including various MLA workshop documents. But what is important is that clear guidelines be set and reiterated in annual review and especially at mid term (e.g., “third year”) review, so that the candidate and chair have a clear articulation of goals and sense of how the candidate is proceeding toward them (See James P. Purdy and Joyce R. Walker, “Valuing Digital Scholarship: Exploring the Changing Realities of Intellectual Work,” *Profession*, 2010, pp. 177–195 (19) for recommended evaluative questions to ask about digital research projects.)

Though important for all candidates in any field, this process is particularly important in DH projects, so as to educate all parties as to the effort involved in what may be an unfamiliar kind of work, and also because DH projects tend to be more fluid and may shift more over time in unexpected ways than other projects. Part of this ongoing conversation should focus on clearly defining expected content, audiences, uses and impacts of the project, as well as documenting any unexpected additions or changes to those categories. Conversations should also focus on how the effectiveness of the project will be evaluated, and who might be possible appropriate evaluators—so there is not a mad scramble at the end to find people who may not actually exist.

Informally, all colleagues at all levels should not underestimate the value of ongoing conversations—the hallway or mailroom encounter in which short conversations about day to day challenges and insights serve to familiarize senior faculty with new kinds of work and make the whole department aware of and invested in their success. Such informal awareness of the progress of a project eliminates much of the “surprise element” for faculty when a dossier comes before them and also helps everyone to more accurately estimate the ongoing amount and type of scholarly labor that goes into it.

*[We have modified the guidelines approved by the MLA Executive Council at its 19-20 May 2000 meeting and were last reviewed by the Committee on Information Technology in November 2002.]*

## 2. Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure Committees in Judging Digital Work

Adapted from an original authored by Cristina Della Coletta, and revised by Cristina Della Coletta, Jo Anne Harris, Andy Jewell, Meredith Martin, Brad Pasanek, Grant Wythoff and the NINES Summer Institute 2011 Group.

Digital technology provides ever more sophisticated tools that transform traditional ways of archiving, interpreting, accessing, and disseminating knowledge. These new tools have occasioned debate on the form and assessment of knowledge production. Therefore we propose guidelines to help evaluate the scholarly contribution of the project.

The term “guidelines” offers a framework that is less prescriptive than that of principles, standards, and rules, while furnishing a map of shared criteria that orients the process of creation and evaluation of digital scholarship. Flexible guidelines are especially important for scholars working with rapidly transforming digital technologies.

The following guidelines help guarantee procedural clarity and fairness of assessment for both candidates and evaluators involved in processes of hiring, reappointment, tenure and promotion. Abiding by the following three procedural parameters ensures informed fairness.

- a) Review and assess the project in the medium in which it was created.
- b) Recognize the intrinsically collaborative nature of digital projects.
- c) Consult specialists in relevant disciplines regarding the various components of the project.

In order to respond to potentially clashing needs of flexibility and normativity, we recommend that the guidelines be framed as a set of general questions rather than a list of prescriptive statements:

### A. Organization, Production, and Integration of Knowledge.

#### 1) *What is the nature of the community that conceptualizes, organizes, and produces this scholarship?*

- a. (Who?) Software engineers? Informatics experts? Interface designers? Archivists and librarians? Humanists and social scientists?
- b. (How?) Hierarchical collaboration (“main investigators” and collaborators); “horizontal” collaboration? Other options?
- c. (Why?) What kind of conceptualization of knowledge does this collaborative set up create?

#### 2) *What is the content of the digital project?*

- a. What decisions and choices have been made regarding the representation of the materials?
- b. What is included? Left out? Why?
- c. How does the project represent various discourses and rhetorical choices?

03) *If non-digital materials have been digitized, how? Have relevant “best practices and standards” been followed?*

4) *How do the elements of the project interact and integrate with one another?*

- a. What are the elements of the project? (multimedia options; commentaries, annotations, interpretive essays, multiple interfaces for different audiences, etc.)
- b. Is there a legible intentionality behind the structure of the data?
- c. Does the interface communicate effectively?

As a result of the choices listed above, does the digital project organize and produce original and innovative knowledge (knowledge as discovery) compared to other formats and other media, in one or more disciplines?

## B. Dissemination of Knowledge

5) *What is/are the intended audience(s) for this project?*

- a. Is the project readily available for its target audience(s)?
- b. Is it equally effective to reach all targeted audiences (for example, in multilingual/multicultural projects?)
- c. Are there potentially valuable unintended audiences?

6) *What kinds of disciplinary fields and professional communities participate in discussions that involve this project?*

- a. Is the project linked to or affiliated with other projects?
- b. Do other projects acknowledge this project?

7) *Who hosts the project?*

- a. A University server?
- b. A commercial host? (see section on maintenance)
- c. What’s the rationale for this choice?

## C. Evaluation and Self-Reflection

8) *What funding and grants did the project obtain?*

9) *Are there formal and/or informal processes of self-evaluation built into the project?*

- a. What feedback/consultation system has been implemented (outside consultants?)
- b. Have need-analysis, interface design, and usability, been discussed, documented, revised in the course of the project development?
- c. Have design experiments/tests have been conducted?
- d. Which ones?

10) *Has the project been submitted for peer-review and review?*

- a. In which venues?
- b. How often?

11) *Has the digital project been presented and demonstrated at conferences, symposia, and invited presentations? Which ones?*

12) *Have papers or studies on the digital project been published?*

- a. Where?
- b. By whom?

13) *Has the candidate submitted a list of qualified potential evaluators who will be able to understand the scope and significance of the project?*

14) *Does the project include an explicit reflective essay that documents all these steps?*

As a result of the choices listed above, does the digital project have the potential of being part of a wider and more sophisticated evaluation and self-evaluation system compared to those available in other formats and other media?

#### D. Maintenance, Sustainability, and Future Plans

15) *What is the project's sustainability plan?*

- a) Where is the project hosted?
- b) Is the server hosting the project likely to be adequately maintained over time?
- c) What are the accessibility plans in the long run?

16) *Has the technical set up for the project been documented and implemented in ways that promote sustainability and accessibility?*

- a. Can new materials be added effectively?
- b. Can problems be identified and fixed easily?
- c. Can it be easily migrated to new platforms?
- d. Is the project's data as open and accessible as possible?

17) *What are the plans for long-term testing, evaluation, future development, and transformation of the project?*

18) *Based on the current trajectory and long-term potential of the project, what is its future?*

As a result of the choices listed above, does the digital project have the potential of evolving and improving over time in ways that are not possible or available in other formats and other media?

We recommend the following resources:

- Modern Language Association, Guidelines for Editors of Scholarly Editions
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln (CDRH), Recommendations for Digital Humanities Projects

### 3. Statement on Authorship

Authored by A. Ardis, L. Brake, C. Della Coletta, J. Ehnenn, R. Gagnier, D. Radcliffe, N. Workman and the NINES/NEH Summer Institute Group 2011.

For decades now, scholars in the humanities have been rethinking the notion of the solitary author as the sole creator of finished products. In addition to the notion of single authorship, there are diverse ways of conceptualizing the author, beginning with the acknowledgment that authorship is defined through discourse and social constructs. Indeed, some conceptualizations of authorship are not single but collective, such as the authorship of periodicals, the collaborative authorship of co-written texts, the apprenticeship relationship between mentors and those they supervise, and the plural communal work that goes into scholarship in the digital humanities.

Scholarly projects in the digital humanities invite us to consider the notion of authorship in some or all of the following interesting and valuable ways:

- a) Author as multimedia practitioner: in addition to being a writer, the digital author may be a conceptualizer, researcher, designer, builder, encoder, etc.
- b) Author as digital polyglot: authors may be fluent in multiple coding languages
- c) Authorship as process
- d) Authorship as collaborative
- e) Authorship as interactive, in both production and consumption

#### Evaluation

Given the above, we recommend that the following practices and standards of evaluation be applied to the scholar who presents work in the digital humanities as part of a dossier for professional advancement, whether at the dissertation or hiring stage, tenure, and/or promotion.

- a) When the author is a multimedia practitioner, evaluation of each aspect of the multimedia project should follow best practices in that individual discipline and be equally valued.
- b) Implementation of each digital language used in the project should follow best practices for that digital language and be well suited to its purpose.
- c) The scholarly digital project should include apparent and justified self-reflection and self-critique of all stages of the process of discovery and development.
- d) Because digital authorship is likely to be dependent upon a number of intellectual agents and because the digitally authored project is an organic system, assessment of collaborative work in the digital humanities should be evaluated qualitatively as a whole rather than quantitatively and fractionally.
- e) The scholarly digital project should provide evidence, whether implicitly or explicitly, that the author is effectively networked in a community of fellow practitioners.

Finally, we recommend that projects authored by scholars in the digital humanities, as in more traditionally authored scholarly projects, be evaluated for the following characteristics: elegance; communicability; working within recognizable conventions and best practices; intervening in the production of knowledge in a given scholarly field and moving that field forward; and sustainability, or, usefulness to and usability by future generations.